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WHITEFACE MOUNTAIN

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WHITEFACE MOUNTAIN

Whiteface Mountain beckons again, its snow-covered trails not yet caught in the rising sun. I'm here in retreat from a world more clearly cruel to recall how much I loved skiing until, with my son on a mogul field, I caught a tip, tumbled down the slope and came to rest in a heap. My right calf stabbing, I finished the run on only one ski. And haven't skied since, but imagine myself on unbroken snow, carving narrow S-turns down the fall line in the cold.

I remember a day here with my father long ago when we could not bundle ourselves enough to stay warm, the ponchos they handed us for the long ride in the chairlift doing little good against the wind. It took the fire in the summit lodge to thaw us out before we could head back down, only to turn around, ride up again, and sit by the fire, as I do now at the base lodge. My son, waiting for the lifts to open, hands me the morning paper with all the news.

James Tilley